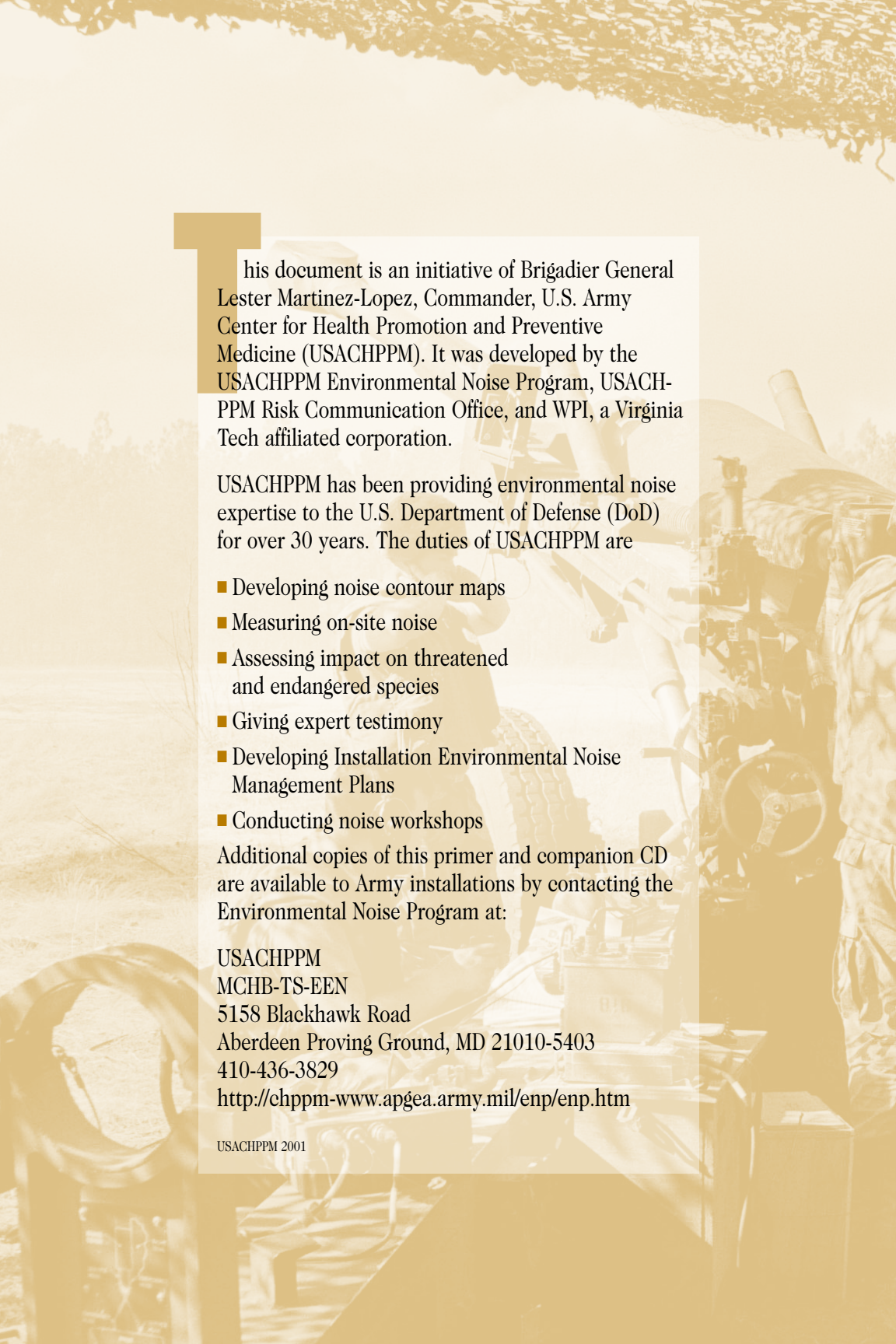




Noise Management

A Primer on
Facilitating
Community
Involvement
and
Communicating
with the Public





This document is an initiative of Brigadier General Lester Martinez-Lopez, Commander, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM). It was developed by the USACHPPM Environmental Noise Program, USACH-PPM Risk Communication Office, and WPI, a Virginia Tech affiliated corporation.

USACHPPM has been providing environmental noise expertise to the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) for over 30 years. The duties of USACHPPM are

- Developing noise contour maps
- Measuring on-site noise
- Assessing impact on threatened and endangered species
- Giving expert testimony
- Developing Installation Environmental Noise Management Plans
- Conducting noise workshops

Additional copies of this primer and companion CD are available to Army installations by contacting the Environmental Noise Program at:

USACHPPM
MCHB-TS-EEN
5158 Blackhawk Road
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5403
410-436-3829
<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/enp/enp.htm>

Foreword

Noise Management—A Primer on Facilitating Community Involvement and Communicating with the Public

Following the suggestions in this primer and utilizing noise assessments can safeguard your installation's mission, ensuring that soldiers are trained and ready when needed.

This primer is an introduction to Army environmental noise issues, management, and resources, with an overview on using community involvement to generate support for noise management planning and abatement activities. The entire primer is available electronically on the companion CD along with a lot of how-to-do community involvement information, ready-to-use fact sheets, and direct Internet links to important Web sites and electronic resources.

These tools are intended for all Army personnel who might communicate with the public about any noise-related matter including an installation and/or garrison commander, a master planner, and public affairs staff. It will also be useful to those who are likely to have noise management responsibilities. Installation personnel involved in noise management will vary from installation to installation, but will likely include range control, environmental management, and the Staff Judge Advocate's office. Many other installation personnel will also benefit from a better understanding of environmental noise and its impacts on both neighboring communities and military operations.

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Public participation often remains the weak link
in noise management at Army installations

U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion
and Preventive Medicine

Public communication is the cornerstone
of any successful noise management plan

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Institute for Water Resources

”

Encroachment issues—the Army and its neighbors

Artillery, tanks, small arms, and helicopters are standard equipment for the Army, and they can be noisy. Loud sounds generated during training often reach neighboring communities—rattling windows, waking people at night, and impacting their lives in annoying ways.

The problems of such “environmental noise” have been exacerbated in recent years due to “encroachment.” That is, population growth and urbanization are bringing civilian communities much closer to military installations and training areas. Many once-remote Army installations are now being asked to share the air, land, sea, and communication spectrum previously dedicated to military activities. While a variety of encroachment problems confront Army installations, noise is the most intrusive for civilians as it can penetrate their homes and lives any time of the day or night.

Growth in neighboring communities is just part of the picture. Other factors also contribute to the increasing number of noise problems:

- Realignment of aircraft, tanks, and other weapon systems at fewer installations (and consolidated use of ranges and operating areas)
- Use of new tactics and more powerful (larger and louder) weapons (e.g., howitzers and self-propelled rocket launchers)
- Increased night operations with the advent of night vision devices

Community involvement is a powerful tool for addressing issues related to Army noise and its impact on surrounding communities before the issues snowball into problems. It can also be used to address other environmental issues between Army installations and their neighbors. However, community involvement should not be used without some advance planning and research. First, you must identify the specific issue or concern, stakeholders, and the unique factors related to your particular situation. The next few pages will help you to understand, in general terms, some of the typical causes of noise problems and the varying related interests and perspectives.

The Army perspective

The Army needs to conduct high-quality training throughout the year to prepare its soldiers for combat. Military success is achieved through hard, realistic training that produces skilled soldiers who have confidence in themselves, each other, and their weapons and equipment. Urban growth, and the inevitable community reactions to noise, are seen as threats to this essential training.

Public and political pressure, legal action, and damage claims against many Army installations have had significant consequences for Army operations—**43 percent of installations surveyed reported noise problems that required either rescheduling, training or moving training ranges to resolve the problem.** (Army Environmental Policy Institute, 1995)

Restrictions imposed due to unresolved noise impacts include

- reduction in available flight/training hours (e.g., limited or no night training),
- raised altitudes of flight operations to reduce noise impacts on surrounding communities, and
- relocation or closing of firing points.

The result can be less effective, less realistic training.



Encroachment on DoD ranges and training areas is a serious and growing challenge to the readiness of U.S. Armed Forces. The Department of Defense needs a comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing the encroachment issues. The approach should include an outreach strategy to increase public awareness of how essential realistic and effective training is to the readiness of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Senior Readiness Oversight Council, November 2000



The community perspective

Noise is unwanted sound. In a world of constant natural and manmade sounds, those that are perceived as noise vary among people in the community. The pivotal issue is the perceived impact or degree of annoyance from noise. To some, loud military sound is “the sound of freedom.” Conversely, others feel military noise deprives them of privacy and quiet. People can be startled by unexpected noise and usually do not understand why generating such noise is necessary. They often have unanswered questions about the necessity of night training, for example, or the need for any live fire training at all.

Recent studies suggest a growing intolerance among citizens and communities for noise associated with Army activities. The impacts of noise on the community include

- diminished privacy and quiet at home,
- interrupted sleep,
- interrupted entertainment and conversation,
- interruptions at work and school,
- property damage such as broken windows, and
- injury to wildlife, livestock or pets.



“

At approximately 10:00 p.m., I heard an extremely loud sound approaching our senior community. It was so loud that my home shook as though an earthquake was happening. I knew it wasn't an earthquake when I could hear the rattling of a helicopter. Then at 3:00 a.m. another helicopter came through. I am a light sleeper and was awakened by the noise.

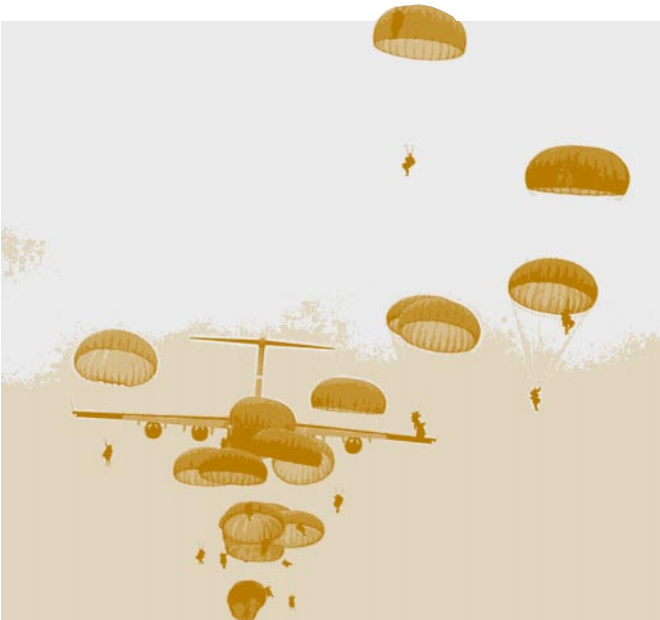
Concerned citizen

”

Finding common ground

Noise is a shared problem that has opportunities for cooperative, mutually beneficial solutions. The Army Environmental Noise Management Program was specifically designed to help installations work with their civilian neighbors to control the impacts of environmental noise. **A noise management program can guide noise management efforts both on and off the installation, often with minimal effort and no adverse effects on Army training or expenses.** It can also help protect the installation's mission by avoiding reduction or degradation of training due to complaints or litigation.

Effective environmental noise management is difficult without a working community-installation partnership. For example, encroachment can be minimized through regulation of land use such as zoning, subdivision regulations, and building codes on adjoining land. Such regulation makes it less likely that incompatible development will occur around an installation, like a hotel that was built within a half mile of a major Army aviation facility. However, only local communities, not the Army, have the authority to implement land use controls. So the Army must work with local communities to prevent noise problems from growing even larger. Community involvement throughout your installation's noise management activities is key to paving the way for better community relations.



The background of the page is a faded, orange-tinted photograph of soldiers in a field. They are wearing helmets and carrying equipment, with some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The scene appears to be a training exercise or a deployment area.

The Army's noise management program

Noise management is one component of the comprehensive planning interaction between an Army installation and the surrounding jurisdictions. The broad planning focus is on compatible uses that sustain the utility of the installation and readiness of its soldiers. This includes protection of endangered species and environmentally sensitive areas, inhibiting emissions (smoke, light, electromagnetic pulses), building heights, accident potential zones, and transportation. The personnel and procedures involved in noise management will vary from installation to installation, but should always include elements of

- noise assessment,
- noise education,
- complaint management,
- noise mitigation, and
- vibration information.

An Installation Environmental Noise Management Plan (IENMP) is the main component of noise abatement planning and an essential tool for finding common ground with neighboring communities. It is an installation-specific study of the existing and future noise environment, developed for the purpose of aiding military and civilian officials and planners in the creation of land-use plans and policies that promote compatibility between the needs of the civilian sector and the installation's mission requirements.

Noise zone maps, created with computer models, are the technical "heart" of the IENMP. (See the "How noise is modeled" fact sheet on the companion CD.) *Words of warning—In some cases installations have become so preoccupied with producing noise zone contours that they try to model insignificant day-to-day operational changes to training. In these situations, the noise contouring process becomes an impediment to noise management rather than an aid. It diverts attention and energy away from the real problem-solving focus of the IENMP and into a never-ending quest for absolutely accurate noise contours.*

Improving noise management through community involvement

Also known as “public participation,” community involvement is a planned effort to involve citizens in the decision-making process and to prevent or resolve citizen conflict through two-way communication.

Community involvement activities range in complexity depending on the severity of the noise impact. Generally “informing” the public is helpful in situations that are not contentious. The greater the noise problem, the more the community should be involved in the actual decision-making process. When necessary, the community should be considered an equal partner in resolving noise-related issues.

An effective public involvement program

- builds trust and enhances relationships,
- strengthens Army credibility,
- educates and informs,
- increases the likelihood of public acceptance,
- reduces costly delays and relocations,
- helps avoid hearings or litigation, and
- leads to better outcomes.

An effective public involvement program demonstrates that your installation makes responsible decisions and has a commitment to preserving the public trust. Ideally, community involvement is proactive, but it can also help to regain public trust and acceptance when noise problems already exist. With integrated installation support, community involvement activities can be easily implemented and produce results that are agreeable to all stakeholders.

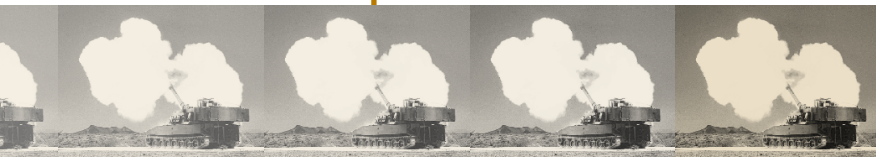


Take the time to do it right

There is no magic formula for effective community involvement. The possible approaches are numerous but can be simplified into some general steps. Allow time and resources for each of the following:

- Identify the audience
- Determine the purpose
- Plan the development (schedule, budget, resources)
- Develop the message (write text)
- Design (create graphics, shoot video)
- Develop a prototype with audience input
- Review (to ensure consistency and accuracy of information)
- Distribute effectively
- Evaluate

USACHPPM's Health Risk Communication Office offers a variety of workshops and training opportunities to help you communicate using a science-based approach in high-concern, sensitive, or controversial situations. More information is available on the Internet at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dts/hrc/>.



Provide involvement opportunities early...

Time spent on proactive community involvement activities early in a noise management program will save time and money later. Before you communicate any information or recommendations from the IENMP, you must know the public and understand their concerns, attitudes, and feelings. Identifying people who have a stake in noise management is the first step.

Each interest group constitutes a “public,” whether it represents some portion of the external community or part of the installation’s internal community. The terms “community” and “public” are used broadly to characterize anyone who has an interest in, or is impacted by, environmental noise.

Your list will likely include people such as a city planner and representatives from adjacent neighborhood communities. Internally, your installation’s range control may ultimately coordinate noise complaint management and the initiation of press releases through the Public Affairs Office in advance of loud training events. Ensure that company-level leaders also have a way of providing input concerning the noise management program so they can express concerns about the effects on training. Review the identity of all the involved “publics” carefully before initiating a program of action and then reassess target stakeholders at each stage of the program. (See fact sheet titled “Identifying stakeholders” on the companion CD.)



...and often

Communication with the local community is not a single event. It is a non-linear process that essentially never ends. There should be frequent opportunities for involvement, whether it be sharing a draft mitigation plan at a public meeting or simply sending out occasional press releases through the Public Affairs Office to keep people informed of what the installation is doing. **Even if your activities are not controversial, let the public know.** Inform them, for example, when training is rescheduled to reduce noise impacts. *Note: You must coordinate with other installation stakeholders, such as public affairs and operations, when planning most community involvement activities.*

Community involvement activities must be selected and tailored to the situation, the community, and the job. Analyze each situation to determine the tools and expertise needed to develop and maintain lasting agreements. Consider your goals and whether progress is being made. If the chosen community involvement techniques do not work in your situation, try to determine why and what other techniques might work better.

Make a good faith effort to involve the community in some way. As you are thinking about which products to use, the community involvement toolbox on the companion CD will help you to select from the full range of options:

- factsheets
- brochures
- Web sites
- exhibit boards/displays
- annual reports
- meetings (large, small, one-on-one)
- tours
- open houses



How to begin

There are many ways to establish two-way communication with stakeholders. For example, you can conduct interviews, moderate an online discussion/bulletin board, or set up an Army display and solicit comments during a county fair. Whatever you do, the public will appreciate the effort. *Note: Look for existing community gatherings. Community involvement activities for your noise management program can often be integrated into existing installation outreach efforts and need not be time-consuming.*

Here is an example approach to involve stakeholders early when developing or updating an IENMP:

1. Notify the public that your installation will be conducting an assessment of the noise environment and provide contact information for people who have questions.
2. Schedule a brief workshop or focus group and invite representative stakeholders for an opportunity to learn about the assessment and the overall noise management program. Invite installation stakeholders to the same event. Advertise that attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions and offer comments about the program and review the final assessment once it is complete. Even if the community input has no impact on the assessment approach, you will have provided stakeholders with a sense that the Army is interested in their concerns and is open to dialogue.
3. Issues may arise during the workshop that require special attention. Assess the situation and plan additional community involvement activities, if necessary. Otherwise, proceed with the assessment.

Presenting a completed IENMP

An Installation Environmental Noise Management Plan has tremendous potential to minimize conflicts, increase community relations, and ultimately support your installation's mission. It is a thorough assessment of the noise environment on and around a military installation, and contains valuable information for making some critical decisions on and off the installation. Effective community involvement can improve the use of an IENMP.

Take your plan off the shelf

Once your IENMP is complete, share the information with stakeholders and solicit their feedback. Present the plan as a reference tool to facilitate communication with local government and as a resource for joint problem solving. In addition to the noise contour maps and technical data, the plan contains background information and suggestions for actions the installation will undertake to reduce noise and what actions communities can take to reduce incompatible land uses. The IENMP contains suggestions, not directives.

The plan can be shared with people in a variety of settings but should always be done with sensitivity to the audience's interests and level of understanding. With prior community involvement, for example, it should be possible to determine what the audience will consider to be the most important information. Remember, you must coordinate with other installation stakeholders when planning a meeting with the community.

Providing an opportunity for public involvement is not sufficient. Planners and engineers must also develop skills for managing the differences that arise when diverse interests are given a voice in the process. Dealing with diverse interests requires strong communication skills and an understanding of the limits and objectives of the community involvement program. It also involves application of some basic rules of human interaction. (See the "Preparing for presentations" checklist on the companion CD.)



When it comes right down to it, other things being relatively equal, the human dynamic is more important than the technical dimensions of the deal.

Stephen R. Covey,
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People



Ineffective community involvement

Where installations do not have a working noise management program, neighboring communities will have little idea about how and why Army noise is generated or what is being done to mitigate it. The extent of community knowledge about environmental noise usually begins and ends at a briefing summarizing the results of a completed IENMP. Unfortunately, such limited communication with the community will likely result in failure—the IENMP will sit on the installation planner’s shelf and communities will fail to pursue any noise management solutions. Civilians might see the Army’s recommendations for noise management as having a one-sided, authoritative perspective. The “Decide, Announce, and Defend” approach is not effective community involvement.

Similarly, without a noise management program the public usually has little input into decisions related to noise mitigation (e.g., changing a helicopter flight route). Such internal decisions are often a “reaction” to noise complaints, which is not an effective use of community involvement. Only when public comment is legally required, such as with certain actions requiring National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation, is community involvement solicited.

To ensure that IENMPs are utilized, various outreach and communication activities should be conducted before, during, and after the plan is developed. Involving the public through the noise management program lets all stakeholders express their views and use gathered data to create a reasonable plan to meet both the Army’s and the communities’ needs.

“

Procedures, rather than actual decisions, are the origin of most people’s perception of political legitimacy.

**Public Planning and Control
of Urban Land Development**

”

Working toward cooperative agreements

Ultimately, the degree of success that Army noise management programs can achieve is intimately linked to the communication and problem-solving efforts that are developed and initiated with surrounding communities and installation personnel. Cooperative problem solving can improve the likelihood that noise management solutions will actually be implemented. Open communications also allow decisions to be made outside the courts. Ideally, noise management decisions that are made will be formalized in a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the installation and the community. Such agreements are the only way to ensure reciprocity and formally demonstrate the installation's commitment.

Land use compatibility

The best means of minimizing noise impacts on communities is to implement land-use controls: zoning, special permits and projects, health codes, subdivision regulations, capital improvement programs, building codes, disclosure of noise levels, establishment of easements, and public acquisition of land.

As mentioned earlier, an installation has no authority to implement land-use controls, as this is the responsibility of the local governments. When communicating about land-use controls, Army outreach activities can serve only to “inform” neighboring residents of the issues and potential community involvement opportunities within the public decision-making process. This requires a strong working relationship between the community and the installation.

Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)

JLUS is a joint planning program partially funded by DoD and available to Army posts and communities near installations. The JLUS program enables local governments to be active participants in a planning process directed toward compatible development. It assures necessary local commitment to implement study recommendations. During the planning process, communication is two-way rather than unilateral. The DoD Office of Economic Adjustment manages the JLUS Program.

One way Army noise management programs have been successful is by encouraging neighboring communities to pass disclosure ordinances. These require property sellers to disclose information such as the existence of the installation and of noise levels from training operations. An excellent indicator of community-installation relations is the extent to which a community adopts land-use controls to prevent encroachment and to protect the military mission.

Mitigating noise on the installation

Affecting land use is a difficult, time-consuming process. Installations and communities need to explore the full range of noise abatement options, including mitigation. The Army can do its part by mitigating noise on the installation, especially where noise problems already exist.

Some noise problem solutions are simple, such as decreasing the amount of explosives. Other problems require a more thoughtful consideration of mitigation possibilities. **All mitigation decisions should be made as a means of preventing noise problems, not as a reaction to complaints.** Similarly, mitigation

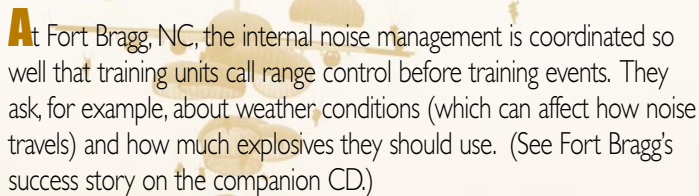


decisions should not be made behind closed doors. Many installation stakeholders will likely be involved when mitigation options are being explored. It may also be an opportunity to invite community stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process. It is not necessary to have a comprehensive public hearing process as is done with some NEPA projects. Simply including community representatives in a brainstorming meeting can create good will. Afterward, communicate the decision to the public to show how much the installation is working to reduce its noise impacts. Be careful, however, not to make irreversible decisions or statements.

The community involvement process aims to raise the diversity of perspectives, and it should not force consensus among stakeholders. In the end, the local government and the installation are accountable for their “informed” decisions and are responsible for following through with them.



At Camp Ripley, MN, the installation commander schedules time with a local radio station to talk about upcoming training activities and to thank the community for their support. Training and other information is also printed in a local newspaper that has a semiregular column called the “Ripley Corner.” (See Camp Ripley’s success story on the companion CD.)



At Fort Bragg, NC, the internal noise management is coordinated so well that training units call range control before training events. They ask, for example, about weather conditions (which can affect how noise travels) and how much explosives they should use. (See Fort Bragg’s success story on the companion CD.)

Ongoing community involvement activities

Continuous, effective coordination with the local community is required to make sure that “spot” encroachment does not occur into noise-impacted areas. Similarly, changes in installation operations and equipment need to be shared with the community. Participation in regional planning meetings or establishing a local post-and-town advisory group are just two ways to keep the communication lines open. Additionally, frequent dissemination of noise-related information will help to maintain (or improve) relations with the public.

Experience has shown that advance warning of activities that might cause annoyance seems to lessen, rather than increase annoyance. There is a saying that “good public relations is worth 15 decibels.”

The following activities require coordination with the installation Public Affairs Office (PAO), which is the only official representative of the installation. Remember that noise management information can be added to existing public involvement activities and communication materials. The PAO is responsible for

- providing regular fact sheets,
- providing tours/briefings,
- keeping elected officials informed, and
- notifying the public of upcoming training events and changes.

Coordination with other adjoining military service installations (e.g., U.S. Air Force bases and National Guard Bureau training sites) is also important. The public cannot discriminate between the different noise sources. Interservice cooperation will help to develop a better noise management program.

A private home was built within an off-post known Zone III* from an Army training range. Local government had assured the installation that development would not be approved within high-noise areas. Yet they granted a site variance to the owner to build the home on agricultural zoned land. The result was that the firing point had to be moved. This would not have been necessary if a MOA had been in effect to document the land-use agreement or if the installation had been aware of the proposed variance.

*Areas where noise levels can exceed 75 decibels (A-weighted) or 70 decibels (C-weighted) from low-frequency sounds such as from artillery or explosions. For more details on noise measurements, see the “How does the Army assess noise and its impacts?” fact sheet on the companion CD.

Integrating a noise management program into your installation's day-to-day business

The need to educate internal installation stakeholders can be just as important as community involvement. When an artillery unit commences training without following proper procedures, much of the trust built through community involvement activities can be quickly eroded. Rude handling of noise complaints can have a similar effect. A widely accepted and understood noise management program can prevent such missteps.

By design, noise management program components such as the IENMP, community involvement activities, and complaint management should be integrated into an installation's other planning programs (e.g., training, land management, and master planning). A successful installation noise manager has to be actively involved in the review of the installation's annual and monthly training plans, the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan, and the Installation Master Plan. Noise should be considered in all installation planning activities, such as the siting of new facilities and ranges. When necessary, units should be required to address noise problems in standard operating procedures.



The only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind, is getting an old one out.

Sir B.H. Liddell Hart



Suggestions for community involvement throughout the IENMP process:

IENMP Steps	Suggested Community Involvement Opportunities
Step 1 Prepare or update noise contour maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify all stakeholders and their concerns.
Step 2 Identify incompatible land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conduct an introductory workshop or focus group with community and installation stakeholders to discuss plans. Receive input on concerns, the best ways to distribute information, and the type of information wanted by the community. ■ Address special issues. ■ Begin mailing list compilation. ■ Attend local meetings to get further input and share information about planning activities. ■ Conduct field visits.
Step 3 Prepare draft IENMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Internally, ensure lower-level (company) involvement/input.
Step 4 Installation staff review and revise draft IENMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop communication products (based on earlier feedback) to introduce and explain IENMP.
Step 5 Final approval of draft IENMP	
Step 6 Conduct community involvement activities related to approved draft IENMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Discuss mitigation concepts, techniques, and options with internal stakeholders (include community members when appropriate).
Step 7 Environmental Quality Control Committee (EQCC) review and approval	
Step 8 Implement mitigation actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hold a follow-up workshop or focus group to share IENMP results and explore future community involvement opportunities and needs.
Step 9 Release official report (final IENMP) to public	
Step 10 Review and update the final IENMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Distribute revised/final communication products and final IENMP to stakeholders identified in Step 1. ■ Continue community involvement activities (e.g., make noise presentations, advertise complaint system) to remind stakeholders on and off the installation of the need for ongoing noise management.

C **omplaint management**

Communication with people who call to complain about noise requires certain skills and techniques. The goal of a complaint management program is to handle neighbors' complaints in ways that will prevent further irritation. Inappropriate complaint management procedures or insensitive communication can increase a caller's annoyance. It is in the interest of the Army to eliminate procedural and relationship dissatisfaction and, by doing so, lessen the chance of complaints escalating into political conflict.

When people call to complain

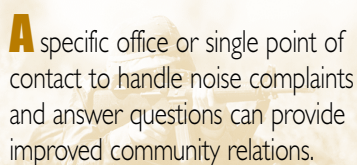
Complaints are typically made by only a small percentage of the people who are bothered by noise in their communities. People who call to complain are often angry because they feel that the negative impact on their lives has been too large. Remember, individuals may respond to the same sound in quite different ways, and their perception is their reality.

Effective complaint management communication is challenging. When people call they need to be

- listened to,
- taken seriously, and
- treated with respect.

They also need to

- get immediate action,
- know what caused the noise and why, and
- know all possible mitigation steps will be taken.



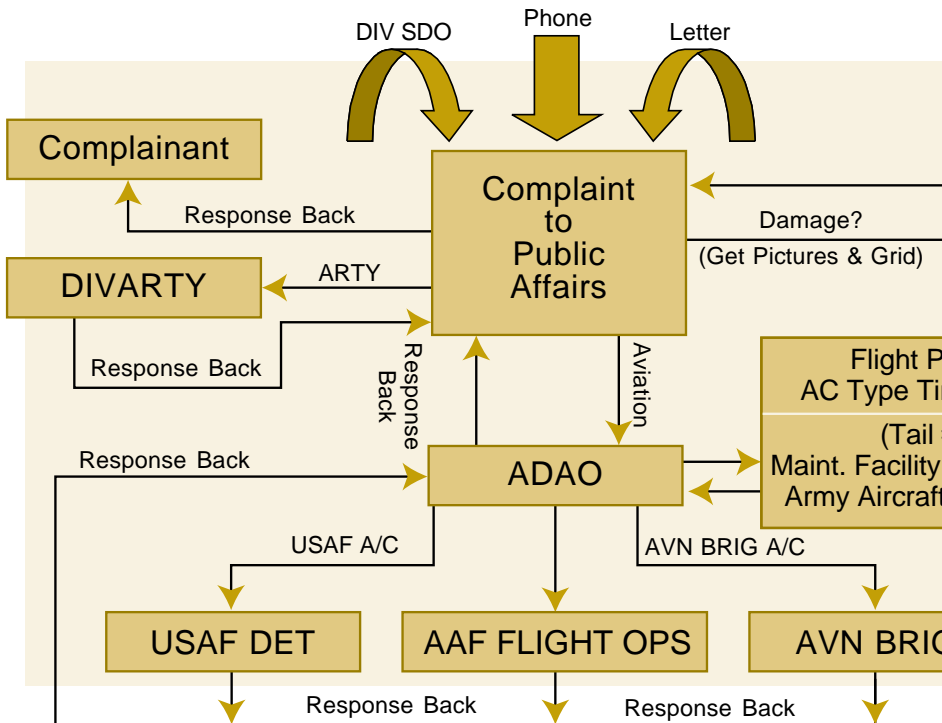
A specific office or single point of contact to handle noise complaints and answer questions can provide improved community relations.

Handling noise complaints is mainly reactive and can involve high-stress communication. If proactive community involvement did not prevent the caller from becoming excessively annoyed, the installation-community relationship requires repair. This is often possible by replying to complaints with an explanation of what training is responsible for the noise, why such training is necessary, how often it is scheduled, and how long will the training go on.

The following are some suggestions for handling complaints effectively:

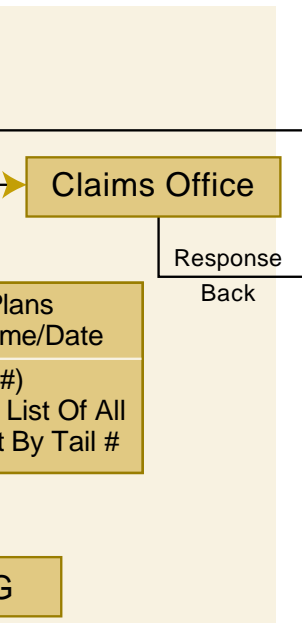
- Understand the goal of complaint management and the limits of what you can do.
- Be courteous and honest .
- Demonstrate integrity and sensitivity to build trust (extends to trust in the Army as an entity).
- Keep a detailed log of complaints.
- Say, “Every effort will be made to correct the problem, mission permitting.”
- Never selectively release information.
- Never lie or stretch the truth.
- Maintain current fact sheets and questions/answers.
- Investigate without delay.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Make a commitment to the caller to follow up (e.g., call back with more information) whenever necessary.

Sample noise complaint process





Procedure



As with other noise management outreach, you should be careful not to sound defensive and realize that, as an installation representative, once you tell something to the community, they consider your response to be installation policy.

The proper handling of noise complaints can be used to educate the complainant about the importance of the installation's mission. A detailed complaint log can provide useful information about noise impacts and help to plan future mitigation activities. In addition, such records should be kept for quality assurance purposes.

Publicizing the complaint management system

A complaint-management system must be visible and accessible in order to serve the community and accomplish Army goals. There are many ways to publicize the system:

- on posters and signs in community areas
- on contract forms
- in advertising—your installation’s complaint system could be the theme of an advertising campaign
- on Web sites

When advertising your complaint system, include advice and a schedule of upcoming training events. Information about your installation’s mission could also be included, along with information about upcoming community involvement activities.

Similarly, the potential for noise complaints can be reduced by providing the news media with press releases when “other than normal” operations are scheduled or when normal operations resume after a period of inactivity. The press release should include the complaint line telephone number and details about the planned activity, including type and reason for noise, timing, and efforts being made to reduce the noise.



Companion CD contents

Use the tools and resources on this CD to educate and engage stakeholders on and off the installation and to generate support for your installation's noise management activities.

Fact sheets— Ready-to-use tools to give to stakeholders

Fact sheets for installation and community stakeholders

- How does the Army assess noise and its impacts?
- What about vibration?
- How is noise mitigated?
- What are Accident Potential Zones?
- Formalizing agreements with the community
- How is noise modeled?
- Joint Land Use Study Program Guidance Manual

Additional fact sheets for community stakeholders

- How does the Army impact the local economy?
- Frequently asked questions
- A developer's checklist
- What to know when buying a house
- Using real estate disclosure to manage environmental noise

Checklists—Tools to help plan community involvement activities

- Creating fact sheets
- Planning a public meeting
- Preparing for presentations
- Effectively handling complaints
- Community involvement toolbox
- Public participation spectrum
- Identifying stakeholders
- Creating a Web site
- Integrating your installation's community involvement efforts

Internet links—Browse Army and other Web sites

Whom to call—Contact Army and Department of Defense noise experts

Training—Discover educational opportunities

Success Stories—Read about two Army installations where noise management has been a success

C

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There is no way around it. Installation activities may be sited to lessen future noise impacts and limited constraints may be placed on night operations, but running an Army is a noisy business. The keys to successfully managing environmental noise at an installation are to

- define the noise impacts,
- prevent or lessen them if possible, and
- communicate clearly and truthfully, early and often, with the affected population.

Regulations

Noise is more often an emotional issue than a physical one, and more of a political issue than a regulatory one. While DoD weapon systems are exempt from regulation under the Noise Control Act (NCA) of 1972, the military is still required to assess the impact of weapon system noise under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and comply with other laws such as the Endangered Species Act. The Department of the Army has also developed regulations (AR 200-1) directing noise management planning for all installations. It is the compliance with these laws and regulations; local community pressures; or state, regional, or Congressional pressures that results in restrictions to military training. Environmental managers should consult their Staff Judge Advocate to decide whether a state or local noise law applies. *Note: Realize that noise is more than a compliance issue. Noise management supports Army missions.*

he U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM) provides worldwide technical support for implementing preventive medicine, public health, and health promotion/wellness services into all aspects of America's Army and the Army community. USACHPPM anticipates and rapidly responds to operational needs and adapts to a changing world environment.

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U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion & Preventive Medicine
5158 Blackhawk Road
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5403
1 (800) 222-9698
<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil>

